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ABSTRACT

In 1997, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation requiring local school boards to conduct school safety audits for each school under their jurisdiction. Guidelines for helping educators conduct these audits are presented here. This guide is designed to help administrators chart an informed, responsible, and proactive course toward maintaining and promoting a safe environment in Virginia's schools. It opens with a brief overview of the nature and scope of violence in schools today, particularly the significant problem of juvenile violent crimes, and reviews 10 components of a school safety audit. The text offers detailed assessments of school safety needs, such as the development and enforcement of policies, procedures for data collection, and the role of law enforcement. It also lists standards for safety and security personnel. The last section provides some effective violence prevention strategies, including conflict resolution, early intervention programs, drug-education programs, and community-based programs. The conclusion notes that educators should incorporate violence prevention and school security as routine considerations in all aspects of educational design and maintains that school safety audits can contribute to the fulfillment of this responsibility. (Contains approximately 90 references and lists sample items for a school safety survey.) (RJM)

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DESIGNING SAFER SCHOOLS FOR VIRGINIA:

A Guide to Keeping Students Safe from Violence

Dewey G. Cornell
Thomas Jefferson Center for Educational Design

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DESIGNING SAFER SCHOOLS FOR VIRGINIA:

A Guide to Keeping Students Safe from Violence

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A Volume in the
Building Blocks to Better Learning series

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Author Notes

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Forward

The second volume in the Thomas Jefferson Center for Educational Design's Building Blocks to Better Learning series is a timely one. Just as the book went to press, a national study reported a substantial increase of student victimization, violent crime, and gang activity in schools. The message is painfully clear–schools are no longer havens from crime and acts of violence. Drawing on extensive experience with juvenile offenders and school systems concerned about safety, Professor Cornell offers a comprehensive approach to establishing orderly learning environments. No school design team can afford to overlook the issues that he addresses.

Daniel L. Duke
Director
Thomas Jefferson Center for Educational Design

DESIGNING SAFER SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA:
A Guide to Keeping Students Safe from Violence

School violence is a misleading term, since violence is a community problem which can occur in homes, neighborhoods, or schools. The dilemma for educators is that attention to school safety concerns can create the impression that schools are unsafe. Excessive attention to a problem in one school, or media coverage of an unusual act of violence, can trigger a widespread perception that all schools are unsafe. Educators must assume their responsibility to maintain student safety while being careful not to arouse excessive concern or unwarranted fears among students, parents, and the general public. A basic contention of this guide is that educators can best meet this challenge by incorporating violence prevention and school security as routine considerations in all aspects of educational design, from architecture to pedagogy and from counseling to curriculum.

In 1997 the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation (HB 1851) requiring local school boards to conduct school safety audits for each school under their jurisdiction. The specific purpose of this guide is to assist educators in conducting safety audits; more generally, it will aid educators in charting an informed, responsible, and proactive course toward maintaining and promoting a safe environment in Virginia's schools. This guide begins with a brief overview of the nature and scope of violence in our schools; then it reviews 10 components of a school safety audit. Finally, this guide describes types of violence prevention programs that are known to be effective, based on objective evidence from empirical research.

Nature and scope of violence in Virginia schools: What do we know?

1. School safety concerns must be viewed in a broader context.

Youth ages 12 to 17 are three times as likely as adults to be victims of violent crime (Sickmund, Snyder, & Poe-Yamagata, 1997). Although school safety is a legitimate public concern and deserves serious attention, parents can be reassured *children are much safer at school than outside of school*. According to crime victimization studies, only 12% of violent crimes against school-age children occurred in school buildings (Office of Technology Assistance, 1995). Although deaths at school receive extensive media coverage and arouse understandable public concern, only about 1% of homicides and suicides of school-age children occur at school (including travel to and from school). For example, in 1992 there were 44 homicides and 9 suicides at school, but 3,889 homicides and 2,151 suicides outside of school (Office of Technology Assistance, 1995).

Nevertheless, crime victimization studies do not tell the whole story. There is understandable public concern that some students in school engage in high-risk behaviors such as weapon-carrying, use of illegal substances, and fighting which are not detected in studies of crime victimization. According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, approximately 10% of high school students carried a weapon on school property in the past month, and in a year, one in twelve high school students were threatened or injured with a weapon at school (Sickmund, Snyder, & Poe-Yamagata, 1997).

Virginia did not participate in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, but nearby states such as North Carolina, South Carolina, West Virginia, and Tennessee did participate. Analysis of results for these states suggests school violence is not a problem confined to highly populated, urban, industrialized states. Rates of school weapon-carrying, as well as threats or injury with weapons at school were slightly higher than the national average. The percentage of students in these states who reported they felt too unsafe to attend school at least once in the past 30 days was also at or just above the national average. Violence in school is often

depicted as a problem of large, inner-city schools, but this image may be incorrect or incomplete. Bullying, intimidation, and threats of injury can be found in many rural schools and smaller communities. The 1997 student shootings in Mississippi and Kentucky high schools are two extreme examples of violence in small communities.

Still, even anonymous student surveys indicate *high-risk behaviors occur much more frequently outside of school.* For example, in a survey of 10,909 students in grades 7, 9, and 11 from a large Virginia school district (Cornell & Loper, 1996), students were asked about high-risk behaviors both at school (including on the way to and from school) and outside of school. Two noteworthy trends emerged. First, the same students who claimed to carry weapons, use drugs, or fight at school admitted engaging in the same behaviors outside of school. Second, the frequency of high-risk behaviors among all students was much higher outside of school. For example, although 8% of students reported carrying a knife for protection at school in the past 30 days, twice as many students (16%) reported carrying a knife outside of school. Although 15% of students reported using illegal drugs right before or during school, 25% reported using drugs outside of school.

2. School safety is a legitimate concern.

School safety is essential to learning. Students cannot learn if they do not feel safe and teachers cannot teach in an undisciplined classroom. Educators must make school safety an important and fundamental concern. Goal 7 of the National Education Goals is: "By the year 2000, every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning" (National Education Goals Panel -- NEGP, 1997). Unfortunately, annual progress reports of the National Education Goals Panel indicate the United States is not making progress on Goal 7. Overall levels of violence, disruptive classroom behavior, weapons, and drugs in schools are not declining (NEGP, 1997).

In Virginia, school safety has been and continues to be a significant concern. The 1992 Virginia Education Summit convened by

the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (Virginia Association of School Superintendents, 1992) identified three key public responsibilities:

> "First, schools and their communities are responsible for providing a safe and appropriate school environment" (p. 5).
>
> "Second, schools and their communities must reexamine their programs to be sure that they support the long-term family and educational needs for prevention rather than just intervention" (p. 6).
>
> "Third, schools and their communities must demand and achieve a strong and consistent disciplinary expectation and application of that expectation for every student" (p. 7).

Annual reports on violence and other crimes in Virginia public schools document the high levels of assaults, weapon possession, and drug use:

Assaults. According to data collected by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE, 1997a) from each public school division in Virginia, there were 31,036 fights during the 1995-96 school year. As a result of these fights, 386 students required professional medical attention. Assaults occurred at all grade levels, but peaked in grade nine. There were 934 physical assaults on school staff by students during the 1995-96 school year, including five stabbings (VDOE, 1997a).

Weapons. Despite a well-publicized policy of zero-tolerance for weapons in schools, Virginia students continue to bring knives, guns, and other weapons to school. A total of 3,863 weapons were confiscated in 1995-96, an increase of 27% over the 3,035 confiscated in 1994-95 (VDOE, 1997a). Included among the 3,863 weapons confiscated in 1995-96 were 189 (5%) firearms, 460 (12%) look-a-likes, and 3,214 (83%) other weapons, most commonly knives.

Drugs. In 1995-96 there were 1,151 alcohol possession incidents and 2,238 drug possession incidents. Although alcohol incidents

declined 5% from the previous year, drug incidents increased 22% (VDOE, 1997a).

Collection of official information about violence at school is sometimes questioned, both because many incidents are undetected and because authorities may refuse to admit they occurred. One publicized example occurred in New York City in 1994, where 400 schools failed to report a single violent incident in their annual school security report (Office of Technology Assistance, 1995). In addition, schools may differ in their criteria for judging an incident to be violent or injurious. For these reason, official statistics can be underestimates of the problem and make school-to-school comparisons difficult.

Gangs. Gangs play an increasing role in juvenile crime and delinquency nationwide (Howell, 1997; Spergel, 1995) and in Virginia. According to a state task force on youth gangs (The Study of Youth Gangs in Virginia, 1996) Virginia law enforcement agencies identified 260 youth gangs committing crimes in Virginia during the summer of 1996. Approximately half of those gangs were located in Northern Virginia and about one-third were in the Tidewater region, with the remainder distributed across all regions of the state. A companion study of youth in Virginia detention centers found that 39% of incarcerated youth acknowledged membership in a gang, crew, clique, or similar group engaged in recurrent criminal activity.

A 1997 survey (Cornell, 1997) of 575 school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and other professionals in Northern Virginia found that over 90% of those surveyed regarded gangs as a serious or emerging problem, and 43% reported working with youth gang members in their schools. Clearly, schools must be prepared to deal with the presence of youth gang members; also, they need professional training and program resources to respond effectively to the youth gang problem.

3. Juvenile violent crime continues to be a significant problem.

United States. Violence in schools is largely a product of violence in the larger community. Nationwide, violent crimes by juveniles increased dramatically from 1984 to 1994 (FBI, 1984, 1995).

Juvenile arrests for violent crimes more than doubled, and murder arrests in particular tripled. Adult violent crime grew at a much slower rate (about 63%) during the same time period. The increase in juvenile violence was not an artifact of demographic changes, since the teenage population was little-changed during those years. Moreover, the increase in violent crime was much greater than property crimes, which increased only about 20%.

Virginia. Juvenile crime rates in Virginia usually follow national trends, with slight variations. From 1984 to 1994, juvenile arrests for violent crimes in Virginia nearly doubled (from 933 to 1,757) and murder arrests more than tripled (from 19 to 66; FBI, 1984, 1994).

Recent trends. There have been conflicting government reports and predictions about juvenile crime which require some clarification. In 1995 a much-publicized government report of the National Center for Juvenile Justice (Snyder & Sickmund, 1995) predicted juvenile arrests for violent crime would double by the year 2010, largely because of the increase in the teenage population. Contrary to this prediction, juvenile violent crime has decreased somewhat since 1994 (Sickmund, Snyder, & Poe-Yamagata, 1997) and this may have contributed to some misunderstanding about violent crime trends for juveniles. After years of steady, dramatic increase, the overall juvenile violent crime arrest rate declined 3% from 1994 to 1995, and 9.2% from 1995 to 1996.

In Virginia, juvenile arrests for violent crime have fluctuated in recent years, with an 11.1% decrease in 1996 (Virginia Department of State Police, 1996, 1997). In 1996, there were 6,933 juvenile arrests for violent crimes against persons (59 murder, 100 forcible rape, 702 robbery, 854 aggravated assault, and 5,159 other assaults, Virginia Department of State Police, 1997).

The recent, unanticipated drop in juvenile violent crime is a welcome change from the prior 10-year trend. Nevertheless, juvenile violence is still much higher than it was 10 years ago, and the prevailing view that juvenile violence will increase, largely for demographic reasons, remains cause for concern.

The unexpected declines in recent years does offer reason for cautious optimism. A continued strong economy has improved conditions for many families and provided more job opportunities to youth. As will be discussed later, the massive efforts in thousands of schools and communities to teach youth how to resolve conflicts and avoid violence has had positive effects as well (Gottfredson, 1997; Lipsey & Wilson, 1997).

Assessment of school safety needs: What is the problem?

School safety problems differ across regions and school divisions, and can change from year to year within the same school. The school safety audits mandated in 1997 modified the Code of Virginia, section 22.1-278.1, to read:

> "School safety audit" means an assessment of the safety conditions in each public school to (i) identify and, if necessary, develop solutions for physical safety concerns, including building security issues and (ii) identify and evaluate any patterns of student safety concerns occurring on school property or at school-sponsored events. Solutions and responses may include recommendations for structural adjustments, changes in school safety procedures, and revisions to the school board's standards for student conduct.

The Virginia Code further states school safety audits are to be based on a list of items provided by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. This list is contained in a 26-page booklet, School Safety Audit Protocol, Procedures, and Checklists released by the Virginia Department of Education in September, 1997 (VDOE, 1997b). Formal audits must be completed every three years, with certification of completion submitted to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The VDOE School Safety Resource Center provides consultation and assistance in conducting school audits (804-225-2928). According to the VDOE guidelines, the 10 minimum components of a school safety audit are:

1. *Safety and security of buildings and grounds*
2. *Development and enforcement of policies*

3. *Procedures for data collection*
4. *Development of intervention and prevention plans*
5. *Level of staff development*
6. *Opportunities for student involvement*
7. *Level of parent and community involvement*
8. *Role of law enforcement*
9. *Development of crisis management plans*
10. *Standards of safety and security personnel*

Here are some considerations relevant to each component:

1. Safety and security of buildings and grounds

The VDOE guidelines contain an excellent checklist of more than 80 items to use in evaluating the security of school facilities. Most of these items can be grouped into two basic categories: physical security and staff supervision. Physical security includes fences, lighting, door locks, window grills, signage, alarm systems and other equipment or physical improvements to facilities. These aspects of school safety help to limit vandalism and theft, discourage unwelcome visitors, and convey a sense of order and security to the school environment. The approach known as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) can be applied to school security (Crowe, 1990). CPTED training and consultation is available from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (804-371-0863).

Staff supervision. As important as physical equipment is to school safety, adequate staff supervision of school buildings and grounds is even more important. School personnel should be able to maintain visual surveillance of all high-traffic or high-risk areas. This means staff can readily monitor the school exterior, including parking lots, courtyards, and entrance areas. School officials should identify areas which are not easily monitored, such as secluded areas behind portable buildings, auxiliary parking lots, and blindspots created by walls, shrubbery, and other objects.

Camera monitors may be useful substitutes for staff observation in high-risk areas (such as auxiliary parking lots) which require

ongoing surveillance. In addition, videorecording cameras can be useful in monitoring school bus behavior, and tend to discourage student rowdiness and harassment of peers.

During school hours unlocked building entrances should be continuously monitored so no one enters the school without being greeted. Monitoring of other school areas must be adjusted to need and may vary according to the physical lay-out. In some schools, it is necessary to monitor hallways continuously and control access to rest rooms.

A large school may require considerable staff resources to ensure a safe environment, and all school personnel may need to contribute time to the effort. In some Virginia schools, teachers routinely monitor hallways between classes or have similar responsibilities supervising other school areas for designated times of day. School resource officers have an important role in these efforts, but they have other roles as well, and it is best if all school personnel share a sense of responsibility and commitment to school security.

Those engaged in planning new schools or renovations should make security an important design consideration. Staff in the school office should have a wide, unobstructed view of the main entrance to the school. Stairways should be easily monitored and, ideally, open to observation from the hallways and common areas. Nooks and crannies should be avoided. Lockers should be placed in open areas, not crowded into narrow rows, and they should be low enough not to block observation.

Potential objections to building security. Invariably, there will be objections that too great an emphasis on building security could create a prison-like atmosphere in what should be an open and welcoming environment. The comparison between secure schools and prisons is easily overstated. The concertina wire, remote control doors, airlock entrances, barred windows, barren landscape, and other features of a typical prison are far-removed from even the most controlled school environment. A secure school is not an unfriendly environment, it is a safe environment which promotes openness and freedom of movement among students. Students are most frightened at school when there is a lack of

supervision -- when they must go into stairwells, rest rooms, hallways, and parking lots where they fear for their safety.

School safety programs cannot be implemented overnight, and should be developed through a planning process which includes input from all interested parties. While an increase in school security inevitably elicits concern about excessive control or regimentation, school personnel and students adjust to the change once security programs are implemented. Consider two examples:

1. When Halifax High School in South Boston responded to a series of violent and threatening incidents involving intruders by requiring photo-identification badges for all students and staff, there was some concern that this measure was too formal and authoritarian. After the system was in place for a period of time, however, staff and students became adjusted to it. Moreover, teachers found that it was easier to get to know students and they interacted more frequently with students who were not in their classes. Hallway incidents declined, perhaps because students who might otherwise misbehave realized they were no longer anonymous. Evaluations of the program found that students and staff alike generally felt safer and more secure in the building (Conner, Johnson, Ramsey, 1994; Principal Larry Clark, personal communication, 1996).

2. In one Virginia high school there was public outcry when police for the first time brought dogs into the school to sniff lockers for drugs. Even though students remained in their classrooms and no person was searched, parents expressed outrage that their children were being treated like criminals. This reaction was in marked contrast to other Virginia high schools where searches are accepted as routine. These searches typically include locker inspections as well as the use of hand-held metal detectors to frisk all the students in selected classrooms or on buses. Just as air travellers have come to accept and appreciate security procedures in airports, over time school-based security procedures also become accepted by both students and parents, and soon are regarded as a routine part of maintaining school security. According to one school principal, the metal detector inspections in his school are

conducted in a relaxed and friendly manner, and students are cooperative.

It is important to emphasize, however, that school security procedures must be conducted in an appropriate manner, following guidelines that treat students with respect and protect them from unfair treatment or unjustified invasions of privacy. The booklet, Student searches and the law, available from the National School Safety Center (805-373-9977), describes relevant case law and standards for schools to follow.

2. Development and enforcement of policies

Safe schools need policies in two primary areas. First, they need a *Security Policy* which provides for proactive, everyday procedures to monitor school grounds and maintain building security. This policy should specify the who, what, and where of building supervision and surveillance described above. For example, who will monitor what areas of the building and grounds at the beginning and close of the school day as well as during classes and during class changes and lunch periods? Who will be responsible for greeting school visitors, recording their presence, and giving them an identification badge to wear during visits? What will be the policy when encountering unidentified visitors? In addition to the school day, a Security Policy should cover school bus travel, field trips, and all after-school or extra-curricular activities.

Second, a *Discipline Policy* is needed to cover responses to student misconduct. It should contain a written Code of Student Conduct and a procedure to make sure all students and parents are well-informed about the Code and its associated disciplinary procedures. Parents should verify in writing they have reviewed the Code with their children and know the consequences of rule violations. For example, all parents should communicate to their children no weapons should ever be brought to school and that the penalty for bringing a weapon to school is expulsion for a full year.

School policies must be consistent with Federal law in the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, which mandates that educational agencies receiving federal funding must have "a policy requiring

the expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year of any student who is determined to have brought a weapon to school" (Section 8001). The federal law does permit some flexibility in the policy stating that "such policy may allow the chief administering officer of the agency to modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis." The Code of Virginia (see sections 22.1-257 and 22.1-277) further specifies the circumstances and conditions under which schools may discipline and/or expel students.

Controlled outcome studies indicate systematic, school-wide efforts to improve school discipline policies can improve student conduct, and reduce student and teacher victimization (Gottfredson, 1997; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Hybl, 1993; Nelson, 1996). Among the key factors in an effective effort to improve school discipline are: 1) increasing the clarity of school rules and the consistency of enforcement; 2) more systematic and frequent communication with parents about both positive and negative behavior; and 3) greater use of positive reinforcement strategies to encourage desired behavior.

Schools need specific language in their policies to deal with youth gang activity. School policy should make it clear gang activity in school or on school grounds is not tolerated. Schools should forbid display of gang signs and symbols, including graffiti and other writings, as well as bandannas, hats, and other articles of clothing worn to represent gang affiliation. Youth with gang tatoos should cover them at school. The distinction between a gang and a club is that a gang engages in recurrent, serious criminal activity (The Study of Youth Gangs in Virginia, 1996). For purposes of school policy, a group described as a crew, clique, posse, mob, or other similar term is considered to be a gang if it engages in recurrent, serious criminal activity.

Finally, there should be an annual policy review. Policies must be enforced in a fair and consistent manner, and they require periodic revision and improvement.

3. Procedures for data collection

Schools should maintain a central record of safety-related incidents and violations. This record can serve multiple purposes -- as a source for reports to outside authorities and as a database for internal study and identification of school trends and needs. A comprehensive record would include several categories of incidents. First, all violations of state or federal law should be identified. Relevant violations include the confiscation of illegal drugs or weapons, assaults resulting in injury to the victim, thefts, acts of vandalism, and other crimes. School authorities should confer with local law enforcement officials to reach an understanding about the threshold for a reportable incident (for example, when a scuffle between students becomes a reportable assault). Historically, schools have tended to under-report law violations to authorities, a practice which can communicate to students a lack of respect for laws and law enforcement. In addition to law enforcement reports, schools must make annual reports to the Virginia Department of Education and share some information with the public.

Second, the school database should record discipline referrals and disruptive incidents which typically do not cross the threshold for reportable legal violations. This information can be used to identify trends and link incidents to student grade level, building locations, time of year, or other potentially useful factors. A database makes it possible to set concrete and specific goals for prevention or school improvement programs, and facilitates documentation of progress in addressing school needs.

With the collection of information come inevitable questions about sharing information with law enforcement officials and the confidentiality of student records. Administrators should consult the Guidelines for the Management of the Student's Scholastic Record in Virginia Public Schools published by VDOE (804-225-2972). Another useful resource is Sharing Information: A Guide to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Participation in Juvenile Justice Programs (Medaris, Campbell, & James, 1997), available from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS; www.ncjrs.org; 800-851-3420).

Direct student input. The definition of a school safety audit contains the directive to "identify and evaluate any patterns of student safety concerns occurring on school property or at school-sponsored events" (Code of Virginia section 22.1-278.1). The School Safety Audit Guidelines do not provide as much guidance on this issue as other aspects of the audit requirement.

Note that an assessment of safety *concerns* would necessarily entail feelings and perceptions of safety. Although inherently subjective, student concerns are important to monitor. Students who feel unsafe at school may be unable to work effectively and in some cases may refuse to attend. School attendance statistics now include tallies of students who reportedly miss school because of fears for their safety. National administrations of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicate that 5% of high school students report missing at least one day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe at school or traveling to and from school (Sickmund, Snyder, & Poe-Yamagata, 1997). Students who feel unsafe may be more prone to bring weapons to school for protection or to respond aggressively toward others.

Although student perceptions alone are not an adequate basis for reaching conclusions about student safety at school, they constitute an important part of the overall safety audit. This component of a safety audit is potentially problematic because student feelings are difficult to gauge, and could be unreliable, particularly if some students choose to exaggerate or distort their report. Nevertheless, an adequate assessment of student safety concerns should include information obtained directly from students.

Student participation. Student input can be obtained in several ways. First, school officials may want to include student leaders in the safety audit process. Student representatives can serve on subcommittees or make some other contribution as members of the audit team. Students can identify safety issues and concerns which are not apparent to school staff and enhance the credibility of staff efforts to involve and engage the student body in safety-enhancing programs.

Student interviews. Second, the audit team should meet with students in small groups to discuss school safety issues and concerns. Meetings have the potential to be illuminating sources of information for educators, but they must be undertaken with care and skill. The students must be assured of confidentiality; they are unlikely to be candid with adults they do not trust. The meeting should be presented to students as an opportunity to describe safety concerns, but not an effort to obtain names of specific students engaged in misconduct or illegal activity.

There should be several meetings composed of different groups of students, depending on school size and diversity of student body. In general, it is easier for students to speak in small groups of about a dozen friendly peers of the same grade. A random selection of students might result in groupings in which some students are intimidated into silence. The groups should encompass whatever natural peer groups or social groups can be found in the school. Students who are good citizens as well as students who have a history of discipline problems should be included.

Each interview team needs a standard list of questions. A few typical questions: Where and when do students feel least secure at school? Are students bringing guns to school? Are students being bullied or intimidated by gang members? Interviewers should be free to pursue these topics in an open-ended, relatively unstructured manner, following the lead of student interests. Periodically, though, interviewers should canvass the group on one of the focal questions, so by the conclusion of the meeting, there is a basis for comparing results for each question across groups.

Although audit teams should be composed of persons from outside the school, school administrators may want to hold discussion groups at other times to stay abreast of student safety concerns.

Student surveys. Anonymous, paper-and-pencil surveys are an efficient and popular means of collecting information. They minimize the problem of confidentiality, and they assure all students have an opportunity to express their concerns. Paper-and-pencil surveys can be controversial because of the potential for false or exaggerated results. Understandably, school officials do

not want to gather information that might create the false perception of a major problem. Inflated reports of school problems can be generated in several ways. First, ambiguous or overly broad questions may garner misleading information. For example, students may admit "carrying a weapon to school" because they carry a small penknife on their keychain. A verbal dispute may be recorded as "getting into a fight." Second, some students may intentionally exaggerate their misbehavior in an effort to impress or dismay authorities. Third, some students may mark their responses randomly or carelessly, thereby inflating the tally of otherwise low-frequency events like fights or weapon-carrying.

While these sources of survey error may lead to an over-reporting of school problems, there may be factors that lead to under-reporting as well. Some students may refrain from disclosing their misbehavior, if they doubt that their responses will remain confidential. No study has determined whether the frequency of under-reporting or over-reporting has the greater impact on school survey results. However, it should be noted there is considerable research on self-reported crime and delinquency among juveniles, and despite some inevitable measurement error, self-reports are generally regarded as acceptable sources of information for determining group trends (Hindelang, Hirschi, & Weis, 1981).

Although it is important to regard paper-and-pencil surveys with caution, it is worthwhile to include them in a safety audit. Here are some tips for constructing useful surveys:

- Avoid overly broad or ambiguous questions such as "Do you feel safe at school?" Instead, ask students about their feelings of safety in certain areas of the building or during specific time periods of the day.

- Avoid overly inclusive questions such as "Have you ever gotten into a fight at school?" which could create misleadingly high statistics. Ask about more narrow events such as *physical* fights, and use a specific timeframe, such as the last 30 days or during the current school year.

- Include two or more questions designed to identify random, careless, or intentionally inappropriate responding, such as "I am reading this survey carefully," "I am telling the truth on this survey," or "I took ten field trips last month."

These suggestions were implemented in a 1995 survey of 10,909 Virginia students (Cornell & Loper, in press). Elimination of surveys judged to be invalid dramatically reduced, but did not eliminate, reported levels of weapon-carrying, fighting, and substance use at school.

Surveys are only useful if they are carefully constructed, and a poorly constructed survey is a waste of time or worse, a source of misleading information. In general, plan to have a survey reviewed by other team members and revise it several times to eliminate problem questions. Make use of standard questions and formats used in established surveys. Construct some hypothetical survey results and outline what sorts of conclusions can be made in a survey report. This process often reveals flaws in the wording or coverage of survey questions which prevent clear interpretation of survey results. A set of sample questions appears in the appendix.

4. Development of intervention and prevention plans

Schools should offer some form of conflict resolution or violence prevention training on a school-wide basis. Understanding and acceptance of students from diverse social, cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds should be emphasized. Prevention and intervention programs should be modeled after established approaches which have been rigorously evaluated in controlled studies. As described below in the section on effective violence prevention strategies, there are a variety of scientifically defensible programs for teaching students to resolve conflicts peacefully and work together more cooperatively. Although no program is completely effective, school leaders now have guidelines for selecting programs based on objective evidence rather than superficial plausibility or philosophical appeal.

Guidance departments should be able to identify children with problems in anger control or aggressive behavior and either help

them through school-based programs or refer them to community resources. Students also should be able to seek assistance on a confidential basis, and information on community resources should be readily available to students and parents.

5. Level of staff development

Understanding school policies. All administrators, teachers, and other staff should be familiar with school safety policies and procedures, and understand their roles and responsibilities. The all-too-common staff complaint, "I don't know what they expect me to do" is an indication of a staff development deficiency and a potential threat to school security.

School-based law enforcement and/or security officers require specific training in their duties and responsibilities. Because their roles may be unfamiliar to school employees, and because their success is greatly enhanced by cooperation and collaboration with other staff, care should be taken that all personnel understand and appreciate the multiple roles and functions they serve.

Even volunteers should have sufficient training in safety-related matters relevant to the performance of their duties. Volunteers may be expected to recognize problem situations or threats to safety, and to take prompt action to notify supervisors or other responsible parties.

Inservice training should cover typical safety problems and contingency plans so all personnel know exactly what is expected of them. For example, what are teachers expected to do if a fight breaks out? If they are assaulted? In some schools, male teachers express concern that there are unwritten policies requiring them to intervene in physical fights. They wonder whether their efforts will be supported if they result in an injury to themselves or to the combatants. Regardless, all staff should have some training in personal safety (Trump, 1998).

Staff also should be familiar with policies on how to respond to students suspected of illegal actions or infractions of school rules. For example, what should a teacher do when a student is suspected of carrying a weapon? How should a teacher respond when a

student appears to be hiding drugs or stolen contraband in a bookbag or on his or her person?

Obviously there are legal issues and liability questions which cannot be left unspecified. Decisions to search students are especially problematic, and administrators should be familiar with court decisions regarding scenarios in which there is or is not a reasonable basis for conducting a search. Schools do not have to meet the high standards of probable cause required of law enforcement officers, but they must meet a standard of "reasonable suspicion." An excellent guide to conducting school searches, Student searches and the law (National School Safety Center, 1995) can be obtained from the National School Safety Center (805-373-9977). This 80-page booklet reviews major court cases affecting school search policies, describes procedures for various kinds of searches, and presents exemplary school policies.

Classroom management and conflict resolution training.

How can teachers best manage their classrooms, and what are the best strategies for administrators to discipline problem students? Without knowledge and training, such critical matters are left to personal preferences, intuition, or simply trial and error. Kauffman and his colleagues (Kauffman, Hallahan, Mostert, Trent, & Nuttycombe, 1993) challenge teachers to engage in a reflective analysis of their responses to problem students; they offer behavioral guidelines, specific strategies, and case studies designed to improve teachers' classroom management skills.

The Communities That Care program developed by Hawkins, Catalano, and associates (1992) includes a substantial emphasis on teacher training in classroom management. In addition to the program's core emphasis on substance abuse, this ambitious model is designed to increase children's school achievement and social competence, and generally reduce delinquent and disruptive behavior. Considerable outcome research supports various components of the approach, including teacher training, classroom management, substance abuse prevention, and social skills counseling (Hawkins, Catalano, Morrison, O'Donnell, Abbott, Day, 1992; Hawkins, Jenson, Catalano, & Wells, 1991; O'Donnell, Hawkins,

Catalano, Abbott, et al., 1995). Communities That Care has an extensive series of planning and training materials, as well as prepared curricula and audio and video materials which can be obtained from Developmental Research and Programs, Inc. (800-736-2630).

Schoolwide training. There is convincing evidence that schoolwide approaches which train and engage all teachers and staff in a common approach to school safety and discipline are more effective than more traditional, less systematic practices (Colvin, Kameenui, & Sugai, 1993; Nelson, 1996). The PREPARE (Proactive, Responsive, Empirical, and Proactive Alternatives in Regular Education; Colvin, Kameenui, & Sugai, 1993) model emphasizes training teachers in the proactive use of instructional procedures to teach students more appropriate behaviors and social skills. Nelson (1996) reported excellent results from a controlled study comparing elementary schools with and without the PREPARE program.

Gottfredson, Gottfredson, and Hybl (1993) conducted a 3-year study of eight middle schools testing a schoolwide program to reduce problem behavior and enhance positive qualities of the school environment. Their program emphasized training teachers in more effective classroom management and increasing the frequency of parent communication. Notably, they found that schools which most fully and faithfully implemented the program, demonstrating schoolwide collaboration, communication, and planning, achieved the greatest improvements in student behavior.

6. Opportunities for student involvement

Students should participate on the school safety team. Student representatives can provide insights into student perspectives and concerns, as well as help build student support for school safety efforts. Student leaders should be encouraged to consider violence prevention and safety efforts as part of the agenda for student organizations and initiatives. School assemblies, instructional sessions, and discussion groups can help acquaint students with safety issues and build support for schoolwide safety initiatives.

Many schools report the success of clubs or programs focused on safety issues. S.A.V.E. (Students Against Violence Everywhere) is an organization consisting of student-run chapters coordinated by the North Carolina Center for the Prevention of School Violence (800-299-6054). In response to a series of violent incidents, students at one Virginia high school established a similar club called Students Against Violence. This club conducted a schoolwide campaign against fighting and violence. With posters, assemblies, and videotaped skits, club members rallied students to counter the notion that fighting was a source of status and approval by peers. Members collected signatures from several hundred students pledging not to fight or observe fights. Such a pledge conveyed a compelling message to aggressive students that their peers do not support fighting. Aggressive youth tend to hold the mistaken belief that their peers will hold them in high esteem because of their aggressive behavior (Slaby & Guerra, 1988). This school observed an almost complete cessation of fights, in large part attributable to student efforts and support by school administrators.

Most students share the same values and concerns about safety as their parents and teachers. And student initiatives can influence public officials as well as peers. In one Virginia middle school, students were distressed by a rash of fights and unprovoked assaults occurring between classes. Students expressed their concerns first in a letter to the principal, then by circulating a petition requesting greater security measures. Still another assault prompted students to protest by holding a walk-out from classes. Images of students carrying placards demanding a safe school received extensive news coverage, and public officials responded by hiring school resource officers and funding an alternative school.

7. Level of parent and community involvement

Parent involvement. Debates about almost any school-related problem, from academic achievement to classroom discipline, turn to the central role of parents. It is widely agreed that without parent support, schools face an uphill battle which they are unlikely to win. Nevertheless, parent involvement remains one of the

most refractory issues in education reform (National Education Goals Panel, 1997). Most experienced school staff can describe multiple failed efforts to invite, solicit, cajole, or otherwise obtain parent involvement. School leaders must strive to maintain a school atmosphere which welcomes and encourages parent involvement. School staff must be patient and persistent, even unrelenting, in their efforts.

There should be numerous opportunities for parents to become involved in school activities related to school safety. Parent input on security and safety issues can be obtained through surveys, meetings, and committees. Parents should be included on school improvement teams, safety committees, or other group efforts to identify and address safety problems. Parents who are hesitant to become involved in substantive or policy-based matters might be invited to participate in other ways. For example, parents can be asked to help monitor hallways, cafeterias, or bus stops.

Parents (as well as students) should be informed about school discipline policies and rules, preferably in writing with a signed receipt returned to the school. Especially when it comes to policies regarding suspensions or expulsions, schools should make every effort to advise parents of the consequences of fighting, weapon carrying, and drug possession at school. For example, if it is school board policy to expel students for 12 months for any possession of a weapon on school grounds, parents should be informed in writing how this policy will be applied. For example, it should be clear if this policy applies to a kindergarten student who carries a pen knife or a pellet gun to a bus stop. It should be clear to parents that if students give an aspirin to a friend, they have violated the school's drug policy.

Community involvement. Community involvement can extend well beyond parents of students who attend the school. Schools could make use of volunteer efforts from other citizens and from local businesses. Neighbors can form watch groups to monitor and protect students walking to school. In one Virginia school division a local hospital agreed to provide nursing coverage to the schools. In other divisions, local businesses have funded safety campaigns

or provided part-time jobs for students in need of vocational training. Senior citizens represent an often overlooked resource for many school services.

School-community partnerships throughout Virginia have resulted in effective programs for students at risk of violent or delinquent behavior. For example, some school divisions have joint programs with local youth service organizations such as the Boys & Girls Club, the YMCA, and Police Athletic Leagues.

8. Role of law enforcement

From a law enforcement perspective, a school contains more persons and generates more public concern over security and safety than any other location in the community, yet law enforcement and education have all too often tended to operate in largely separate domains. In past generations, schools were regarded as crime-free zones which had little need for police presence. Such an idyllic view was possible in part because noncompliant or disruptive students rarely remained in school. Schools were often segregated by race and social class. And because schools were smaller and more regimented, students were more easily supervised and managed.

When problems arose in the past, teachers and principals constituted the "law and order" on school grounds. Teachers generally carried out the police functions of responding to incidents, establishing order, and then identifying and apprehending offenders. Furthermore, principals or assistant principals carried out the judicial functions of determining guilt and administering punishment. Such a system has the virtues of simplicity and efficiency, and school administrators retain authority over their buildings.

As the rate and frequency of serious juvenile crimes have grown in the United States (Snyder & Sickmund, 1995), the problems faced by many schools have changed substantially, and the traditional system of teacher-as-police-officer and principal-as-judge is increasingly strained. Schools with several thousand students have reached a size which rivals many small towns or communities. Although teachers and principals must continue to have primary responsibility for maintaining order and discipline in schools,

incidents which cross the line into criminal behavior (e.g., serious misdemeanors and felonies) require police involvement (Kipper, 1996). Schools are not prepared to respond autonomously to criminal acts like robbery, drug-dealing, and aggravated assault, nor should this become still another burdensome expectation they should meet.

Historically, schools have been reluctant to involve the police, because of the significant consequences which ensue (Office of Technology Assistance, 1995; Trump, 1998). Not only does the student face the legal consequences of his or her actions, the school surrenders much of its autonomy and authority, and risks drawing public scrutiny and criticism. As a result, many schools still fail to notify police when crimes occur on their property (American Association of School Administrators, 1981; Trump, 1998). This practice is not an appropriate model of civic responsibility and may communicate to students a lack of respect for our legal system.

Law Enforcement Collaboration

School and community are not separate domains; the school is a fundamental and essential component of any community which cannot be viewed in isolation (Kipper, 1996). At a minimum, school administrators should have a good working relationship with local law enforcement authorities. The principal should be familiar with the law enforcement officers who have responsibility for the school and surrounding community. There should be an explicit understanding of the situations and circumstances in which law enforcement should be notified about criminal acts at school. There should be plans for law enforcement patrol as needed during the school day, after school hours, and at after-school events. Finally, law enforcement should play a significant role in school safety evaluation, planning, and training.

Community policing and problem-solving. Most school divisions today recognize the need for a good working partnership with their local police departments. However, the nature of this partnership should reflect the evolution in law enforcement methods and the roles of modern police officers. *Community policing* is a

philosophy of law enforcement which places great emphasis on working collaboratively with communities, and on identifying and resolving problems which threaten public safety. In short, although law enforcement officers retain traditional roles in investigating crimes and responding to illegal behavior or threats to public safety, they also assume a broader, proactive and preventive role as community leaders. Community-oriented police officers strive to develop and maintain a solid, trusting, and collaborative relationship with the law-abiding citizens in their neighborhoods. Information on community policing can be obtained from the Community Policing Consortium in Washington, D.C. (800-833-3085).

Problem-oriented policing (Goldstein, 1979) is an approach to police work which goes beyond the traditional emphasis on patrol and arrest statistics. Problem-oriented policing places fundamental emphasis on investigating the sources and causes of criminal activity, developing strategies for long-term solutions, and subsequently evaluating the effectiveness of those solutions. Problem-oriented policing involves careful analysis of crime problems, such as identifying high-crime locations, times, and situations, and then concentrated efforts to control crime through strategies such as apprehension of the most frequent or habitual offenders. Controlled studies of community policing in general and problem-oriented approaches in particular have found substantial reductions in crime and improved police-community relations (Sherman, 1997).

School resource officers. There are a variety of models for placing law enforcement officers in schools, ranging from regular, sworn police officers assigned to schools by local police agencies to the school division's employment of its own personnel in security roles. There are some unsettled issues concerning the appropriate division of responsibilities and roles, and some understandable variations across school divisions. In general, the role of a security officer who primarily patrols school grounds and provides security should be distinguished from the multiple roles of a sworn law enforcement officer who serves as a school resource officer. The Virginia School Resource Officer Resource Handbook (Atkinson,

1997) is an excellent resource on the use of officers in schools and contains information on model programs in Virginia and elsewhere. Virginia school resource officers have roles in maintaining security and enforcing laws, but also have roles as teachers and resource persons for students. Information on School Resource Officer training can be obtained from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (804-371-0863) and the School Safety Resource Center at the Department of Education (804-225-2928). The National Association of School Resource Officers in Boynton Beach, Florida, is another source of information (561-736-1736).

The most fully trained School Resource Officer (SRO) is a sworn police officer who uses the methods of community policing (Atkinson, 1997; Kipper, 1996). The SRO serves as a visible deterrent to crime, advises on security matters, responds to emergency situations, and handles criminal law violations. The SRO uses a systematic, problem-oriented approach to identify, analyze, and respond to chronic crime problems such as assaults, drug use, theft, weapon-carrying, and vandalism.

The SMART (School Management and Resource Teams) program is a model approach developed in the Norfolk Public Schools for maintaining a computer database on school disciplinary incidents and criminal acts. The database is used proactively for designing and tracking intervention and prevention plans (Atkinson, 1997). More information on SMART can be obtained from the Director of Pupil Personnel in the Norfolk Public School District (757-441-2811)

The SRO is the liaison with local law enforcement and works in close coordination with the principal. The SRO should serve as a valued member of the school staff, working cooperatively with student services personnel such as guidance counselors, psychologists, and social workers. SRO's must be skilled in public relations and maintain good rapport with students.

In addition to law enforcement responsibilities, an SRO has an educational role in the school, making classroom presentations and consulting informally about law-related matters. Common topics include personal safety, crime prevention, alcohol and drug aware-

ness, traffic law, date rape, sexual abuse, and Virginia law regarding offenses such as assault, shoplifting, and vandalism. More broadly, the SRO provides a positive role model and encourages respect for the law. From this perspective, SRO services make an important contribution to prevention efforts.

9. Development of crisis management plans

Every school principal should be familiar with the 1996 Resource Guide for Crisis Management in Schools available from the Office of Compensatory Programs of the Virginia Department of Education (804-225-2870). It is an exceptionally useful, practical guide to crisis management.

Using the Resource Guide as a key reference, each school should develop and implement a *Crisis Management Plan* to direct responses to emergencies and other events which have the potential to disrupt the entire school. An abbreviated list of topics covered in the Resource Guide includes: accidental injuries, angry persons, assaults, bomb threats, bus accidents, death, fights, fire, hostage situations, intruders, missing children, poisoning, power failures, rape, suicide, vandalism, and weather events.

A comprehensive *Crisis Management Plan* should identify the team responsible for responding to various types of crises and specify the basic roles for each team member. There should be provision for coordinating efforts with central office staff and working with relevant community groups, such as the local police, health care facilities, and community service agencies. Communication is critical during a crisis, and there should be consideration given to the logistics of notifying team members, school staff, students, parents, police and medical personnel, and other persons outside the school, including the media when appropriate.

There should be regularly scheduled training to make sure all team members are familiar with various crisis plans and understand their responsibilities. The Resource Guide lists some training scenarios and provides helpful suggestions for training exercises. Finally, there should be provision for post-crisis follow-up and review. Team members often need an opportunity to debrief and discuss

the crisis, as well as evaluate their experiences and make any appropriate improvements to the existing plan.

Fortunately, there are a variety of good resources on school crisis management. The School Crisis Survival Guide (Straub & Petersen, 1992) covers management techniques and counseling methods for working with students and staff, and is available from Simon and Schuster (201-592-2000; ISBN 0-87628-806-9). The book Crisis Intervention in the Schools (Pitcher & Poland, 1992) provides a systematic analysis of school crisis principles and practices aimed at school psychologists, available from Guilford Publications (800-365-7006). Containing Crisis: A Guide to Managing School Emergencies (1990) is directed primarily to school administrators and policy makers, and is available from the National Educational Service (800-733-6786). Responding to Adolescent Suicide (1988) is a 29-page booklet prepared by the Phi Delta Kappa Task Force on Adolescent Suicide and is available from the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation (800-766-1156).

10. Standards of safety and security personnel

Security personnel employed by schools should undergo thorough applicant screening and background checks. Ideally, security plans are developed in collaboration with local police departments to help assure school security personnel meet high standards of training and qualification. In addition to basic security training, school security personnel should receive training in areas specially relevant to functioning in schools. These areas include understanding laws relevant to school functioning such as Child Abuse and Neglect laws, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Security personnel should be knowledgeable of the roles and responsibilities of school personnel such as guidance counselors, nurses, psychologists, and social workers. Finally, school security personnel should have skills in relating to children and adolescents, and an understanding of relevant developmental and social issues. The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (804-371-0863) and the School Safety Resource Center at the Department of Education (804-225-2928) provide training

for School Resource Officers and have an excellent training handbook (Atkinson, 1997). Trump's (1998) Practical school security: Basic guidelines for safe and secure schools is a particularly good resource on school security basics.

Victim rights. Schools have obligations to protect their students and be sensitive to victim rights issues. There is legitimate concern that schools can be sued for failure to protect students from criminal acts of violence. Although many court decisions have protected schools from liability under the principle of government immunity (Rapp, Carrington, & Nicholson, 1992), the time and cost of lawsuits are substantial, and public sentiment holds that schools should be accountable for student safety. The National School Safety Center has published a thorough review of court decisions and relevant law concerning victims' rights in schools (Rapp, Carrington, & Nicholson, 1992). An excellent companion resource is Student Searches and the Law (National School Safety Center, 1995), which is a guide for administrators concerning how and when students may be searched.

Effective violence prevention strategies: What works?

All too often in schools, promising new programs are adopted with great anticipation, but eventually enthusiasm wanes and the programs fall by the wayside or are replaced by another round of initiatives. After years of disappointing results, many educators understandably hold the pessimistic belief that "nothing works" with delinquent youth. On the contrary, there is now rigorous scientific evidence supporting specific types of intervention and prevention programs (Cornell, 1997; Gottfredson, 1997; Lipsey & Wilson, 1997). Controlled outcome studies indicate that some carefully implemented programs substantially reduce delinquency and aggression, and improve students' social competence and cooperative behavior. Here is an overview of a variety of programs and approaches which have credible evidence of effectiveness.

1. Conflict resolution and violence prevention programs

Conflict resolution and peer mediation. The heart of conflict resolution is teaching students to listen carefully and respectfully

to another person's point of view, accept that there are meaningful differences, and develop creative, mutually satisfactory solutions. Furthermore, students can be taught to mediate disputes between peers by facilitating a dialogue through which disputants find their own solution. The National Institute for Dispute Resolution estimates there are over 8,500 conflict resolution programs in the United States (Bodine & Crawford, 1998). Bodine and Crawford (1998) describe model programs and review a wide range of studies demonstrating the efficacy of conflict resolution education. There is rigorous evidence in support of comprehensive school programs incorporating peer mediation and other forms of conflict resolution (Gottfredson, 1997). For example, Johnson and Johnson (1995a) conducted extensive research in support of the "peace-maker" approach, using whole-school or cadre methods, with programs for all grade levels. Their controlled studies (Johnson, & Johnson, 1995b) demonstrated students can learn and retain conflict resolution skills, and subsequently apply their skills to actual conflicts in both school and family settings. Their program reduced overall school problems and facilitated academic achievement.

There are many resources for additional information, including The Handbook of Conflict Resolution Education (Bodine & Crawford, 1998) published by the National Institute for Dispute Resolution (NIDR, 202-466-4764; email nidr@nidr.org). In 1995 the National Association for Mediation in Education (NAME) merged with NIDR and became the Conflict Resolution Education Network (CRENET). The National Resource Center for Youth Mediation (800-249-6884) has extensive training materials. The Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (800-638-8736) provides a guide to conflict resolution education programs, Conflict resolution education. A guide to implementing programs in schools, youth-serving organizations, and community and juvenile justice settings. Additional information is available from the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program of the U.S. Department of Education (202-260-3954) and the Virginia Department of Education (804-225-2928).

Violence prevention training. Violence prevention training can help aggressive youth cope with their frustration and hostility, and

resolve conflicts without fighting. For example, the Duke University "Coping Power" program developed by Lochman (1992) to teach aggressive youth to cope with their anger has been shown to help children correct distortions in their perceptions of social interactions and choose non-violent alternative courses of action. Hammond and colleagues have developed the Positive Adolescents Choices Training (PACT) program for work specifically with African-American youth (Hammond, 1991; Hammond & Yung, 1993). PACT uses culturally sensitive videotapes to teach youth social skills such as strategies for expressing and responding to criticism and negotiating solutions to disputes.

Overall, there is considerable research to support cognitive-behavioral approaches which reduce aggressive behavior, improve school attendance and grades, and reduce substance abuse (Bry, 1982; Izzo & Ross, 1990; Lochman, 1992; Rotheram, 1982). Unfortunately, some briefer, but more popular approaches to violence prevention, typically broad-based curricula presented by teachers in a few sessions, have not been proven to be successful. The most effective programs are designed for use by psychologists or professional counselors with small groups of identified aggressive youth.

For information on the "Coping Power" program, contact Dr. John Lochman (919-684-8732). For information on PACT, contact Research Press (217-352-3273). For information about a wide range of anger control and violence prevention programs, contact PAVNET (Partnerships Against Violence Network), which is a virtual library of reports and guidebooks from seven different Federal agencies (http://www.pavnet.org/).

Bullying reduction campaigns. Bullying is such a longstanding and pervasive problem there is danger educators will ignore it, or worse, come to regard it as a normal or inevitable part of growing up. Millions of children each year are subject to harrassment, threats, and humilation which would not be permitted in the adult workplace. The effects of bullying on children's emotional and psychological well-being, as well as their academic achievement, are often overlooked. Bullying is a serious problem which can be identified and addressed in elementary school. School-wide

campaigns which clearly condemn bullying can dramatically reduce it, and in turn lower the likelihood of later aggression and delinquency (Greenbaum, Turner, & Stephens, 1989). Olweus (1992, 1993, 1995) developed and tested a highly successful program used first in Norway and later in the United States and other countries. For information on the bullying program, the book Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do can be ordered from Blackwell Press (800-216-2522). Other English-language materials can be obtained by contacting Dan Olweus (telephone 47-55-21-23-27), University of Bergen, Oysteinsgate 3, N-5007 Bergen, Norway. Programs and videotapes on bullying can be obtained from the National School Safety Center (805-373-9977).

2. Early intervention programs

Social competence development. Children as young as age 4 can be taught to solve interpersonal problems in an empathic and considerate manner. Social competence generally refers to the ability to get along with others and cope with problems effectively. There are several well-designed and rigorously evaluated programs which teach social competence (Greenberg, Kusche, Cook, & Quamma, 1995; Caplan, Weissberg, Grober, Sivo, Grady, & Jacoby, 1992). One of the best-known programs, Interpersonal Cognitive Problem Solving (ICPS, also known as "I Can Problem Solve") was developed by Myrna Shure and colleagues over the course of thirty-five years. This approach teaches children to identify problems, recognize the feelings and perspectives of others, consider the consequences of alternative solutions, and then choose the best course of action. There are inexpensive manuals and workbooks -- from preschool to grade 6 -- which can be used by either teachers or parents (Shure, 1992, 1996a, 1996b). Numerous evaluations, including multi-year follow-up studies, document that training improves children's behavior and generalizes across classroom, home, and peer situations (Shure, 1997). Children are less impulsive and disruptive, and more cooperative and prosocial with peers and adults. For ICPS materials, contact Research Press (217-352-3275).

Primary mental health prevention (PMHP). The Primary Mental Health Prevention (PMHP) project is one of the oldest and most respected school-based programs for identifying and treating children at risk of emotional and behavioral problems (Cowen, et al., 1996). PMHP has evolved over the course of nearly 40 years; the basic model still involves carefully supervised, paraprofessional counseling for children with emotional or behavioral problems. There are specialized components to teach social problem-solving, assist children with divorced parents, facilitate peer relationships and encourage cooperative learning (the "Study Buddy" program). A variety of large-scale, multi-year program evaluations involving thousands of students documented positive changes in the emotional and behavioral adjustment of PMHP children. PMHP has a well-established dissemination and training program; the model is now formally employed in California (180 school districts), Connecticut (23), New York (134), and Washington (34), with more than a dozen other states implementing similar programs in one or more school districts. Dr. Dirk Hightower directs the PMHP at the University of Rochester (716-273-5957).

Preschool programs with home visits. There is extensive evidence that preschool programs, especially when combined with weekly home visits over a period of years, can have substantial, long-term impact on families and the quality of a child's adjustment (Tremblay & Craig, 1995; Yoshikawa, 1994). Some programs like the Perry Preschool Project found that children randomly assigned to the preschool and home visit program both did better in school than control children and had fewer arrests as juveniles and adults (Berreuta-Clement, et al., 1985). A strength of the Perry Preschool Project was its emphasis on facilitating parent involvement in children's academic and social development. Information on early childhood programs can be obtained from Project Head Start (202-205-8572) or the National Association for the Education of Young Children (800-424-2460).

3. Drug-education programs

Drug education programs typically involve school-based instruction about the negative effects of alcohol and drug use, accompanied by efforts to encourage responsible decision making. The

most popular such program, DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) is used in 70% of the nation's school districts. One important success of DARE is it has brought law enforcement and education together in a common effort. DARE programs have greatly facilitated school-police collaboration, increased student understanding of the law, and improved student relationships with law enforcement officers. Nationwide, DARE programs are very well-regarded by the general public as well as by students and parents.

Despite its popularity, DARE and similar programs are highly controversial. DARE and similar programs have been extensively and repeatedly evaluated by numerous researchers employing thousands of students from hundreds of schools across the country. In 1994 the Research Triangle Institute (Ringwalt, et al, 1994) released a very thorough review of DARE for the National Institute of Justice which included careful examination of the most rigorous studies available. A more recent review (Gottfredson, 1997) of past research confirmed the basic conclusions of the Research Triangle Institute. Interested readers are urged to review these reports. In brief, objective studies unfortunately indicate DARE and similar programs have yielded disappointing results, achieving little or no long-term change in alcohol and drug use (Gottfredson, 1997; Ringwalt et al., 1994).

Perhaps there are problems in the implementation rather than the basic idea of drug education. Some forms of drug education are effective. Life Skills Training (L.S.T.; Botvin & Eng, 1982; Botvin, Baker, Botvin et al., 1984; Botvin, Baker, Renick et al., 1984; Botvin, Batson et al., 1989) delivers a broad approach to social competency and skills development through 16 sessions for 7th grade students, with eight booster sessions in grades 8 and 9. For information on Life Skills Training, contact the Institute of Preventative Research at Cornell Medical College (212-746-1270). ALERT (Ellickson & Bell, 1990, Ellickson, Bell, & McGuigan, 1993) is another successful program with an emphasis on social resistance skills; it has been evaluated in 30 schools.

What distinguishes an effective drug education program from an ineffective one? Although research is not yet definitive on this

issue, effective programs appear to have skilled teachers who do more than simply recite information. Second, programs which rely only on fear arousal, moral exhortation, or self-esteem building are insufficient to change student behavior. Finally, programs that engage students in the development and practice of relevant social skills, especially resistance of peer and media influences, are most effective (Gottfredson, 1997). Many programs, including DARE, are under revision to improve their effectiveness.

4. Community-based programs

School personnel should be familiar with local community prevention and intervention programs, and can take an active role in supporting and advocating for effective programs.

Mentoring. Mentoring is a relatively inexpensive approach in which adult volunteers spend time each week with young persons in recreational and educational activities. Mentors should be carefully selected to serve as positive role models. Also, they need some supervisory support. A controlled experiment with 959 youth in 8 cities found the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program resulted in a 46% reduction in drug use, a 32% reduction in hitting people, and a 52% reduction in truancy (Grossman & Garry, 1997; Tierney & Grossman, 1995). Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America can be contacted at 215-567-7000. A wealth of additional information can be obtained from PAVNET (Partnerships Against Violence Network; http://www.pavnet.org/).

Supervised recreational programs. Recreational programs are controversial and most of them have not been adequately tested. For example, there is little hard evidence concerning midnight basketball. Several controlled studies, however, have found that *well-supervised* after-school recreational programs substantially reduce juvenile crime, drug use, and vandalism. The Boys & Girls Clubs recreation and drug prevention program (Schinke, Orlandi, & Cole, 1992) was found to be effective in two studies conducted in a series of public housing projects. A Canadian study (Jones & Offord, 1989) of another intensive after-school program (using sports, music, dancing, and scouting) demonstrated a 75% reduction in juvenile arrests, while arrests at a comparison site rose 67%.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America has over 1,700 affiliated clubs serving over 2.2 million children (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1995). Clubs provide a wide range of educational and counseling recreational services in addition to recreational programs. Contact Boys & Girls Clubs of America (404-815-5751) or the Bureau of Justice Assistance Clearinghouse (800-688-4252) for more information.

Curfews. Curfews are being widely implemented across the nation, and already exist in more than 2/3 of the nation's 200 largest cities (OJJDP, 1996; Ruefle & Reynolds, 1995). Although they have not been as rigorously evaluated as most other programs listed here, several reports (summarized in OJJDP, 1996) describe substantial reductions in juvenile crime and victimization during curfew hours. Dallas reported juvenile victimization dropped 17.7% and juvenile arrests dropped 14.6%. Phoenix reported a 10% decrease in juvenile arrests for violent crimes. The Fourth District of Chicago implemented a curfew program which was followed by reductions in juvenile arrests for serious crimes, including an 11.5% decrease in burglaries, a 30.6% reduction in vehicle thefts, and a 66% reduction in theft. New Orleans reported a 27% reduction in juvenile crime. Denver reported a 17% drop in motor vehicle theft in the first year and 23% reduction the second year of operation.

Two points deserve emphasis. First, curfew legislation must be carefully designed because curfews often face legal challenges on constitutional grounds. Second, curfews should be implemented as part of a more comprehensive program which typically includes a curfew center staffed by social service professionals and community volunteers. Also, curfew offenders may be referred to educational, recreational, or job programs. The Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse can provide additional information (800-638-8736). A model policy developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) can be obtained by calling IACP (703-836-6767).

Parent education. Parents can be taught to be effective in managing their children's behavior, but a brief course is not sufficient. Effective programs involve parents in ongoing relationships and training sessions which last from six months to several years. This

investment pays dividends in reduced delinquency and better school adjustment for many years afterwards. Several parent education programs are available from the Communities That Care organization (Hawkins & Catalano, 1992). Further information can be obtained from Developmental Research and Programs, Inc. (800-736-2630).

Family therapy. Family therapy refers to a host of different treatment approaches linked by their common emphasis on treating the whole family rather than individuals. The literature on family therapy is too extensive to summarize here. Functional family therapy (Alexander & Parsons, 1982) is one form of family therapy which has been especially effective with delinquent youth. Treatment makes use of cognitive and behavioral methods to improve family relationships and increase reciprocity and cooperation among family members. Early outcome studies demonstrated that functional family therapy improved family relationships and reduced recidivism among adolescents referred by juvenile court for offenses such as truancy, theft, and unmanageable behavior (Klein, Alexander, & Parsons, 1977).

Multisystemic therapy (Family Services Research Center, 1995; Henggeler, 1991) is one of the most cost-effective and demonstrably effective treatments for high-risk or delinquent children and their families. In controlled outcome studies, multisystemic therapy has proven to be superior to standard treatments for chronic juvenile offenders, inner-city at-risk youth, child-abusive families, and other traditionally difficult populations. Multisystemic therapy is a relatively short-term (1-6 months) but intensive form of therapy which is aimed at strengthening family functioning. A hallmark of this approach is the therapist's role as a problem-solver who works closely with parents to identify and remedy problems in a wide variety of areas, ranging from a child's school attendance to marital discord.

Typically, therapists begin treatment by visiting the family several times a week for sessions ranging from 15 to 90 minutes, and later gradually taper contacts prior to termination. Therapists make flexible use of family therapy, parent education, and cognitive-behavioral techniques to improve family relationships, strengthen

parental authority and effectiveness, and modify children's behavior. This approach is carefully described in a treatment manual (Henggeler, 1991; see also Henggeler & Bourdin, 1990) and has been rigorously evaluated in a series of controlled outcome studies. It is important that therapists faithfully adhere to MST principles and procedures for this treatment to be effective. A recent study (Henggeler, Melton, Brondino, Scherer, & Hanley, 1997) found that MST effectiveness declined when therapists failed to follow the treatment model. Information is available from the Family Services Research Center for the Medical University of South Carolina (803-792-8003).

Group homes. Lipsey and Wilson (1997) reported effective community residential programs provide an array of services including group and individual counseling, educational support, and vocational training. The most effective programs utilized a family home approach in which adult supervisors served as "teaching parents" working closely with a small number of youth. For example, Achievement Place (Kirigin, Braukmann, Atwater, & Worl, 1982; Levitt, Young, & Pappenfort, 1981; Wolf, Phillips, Fixsen, 1974) places six to eight youth with a couple who serve as surrogate parents and child advocates while administering a behaviorally oriented program. Youth can return to their own homes on weekends and remain in their local schools. Achievement Place group homes are now organized according to a more general Teaching-Family Model (Bernfeld, Blase, & Fixsen, 1990). Critical to the success of group homes is the training and experience of treatment personnel and their faithful adherence to effective treatment procedures.

Conclusions

School safety must be regarded as a routine and essential component of educational design and school functioning, not merely a response to crisis events. School safety initiatives must be proactive, and not reactive, responses to the threat of violence at school. Educators can ill afford to implement programs only after acts of violence have occurred.

From a liability perspective, schools in the past have often been shielded from legal responsibility for violent acts at school because such acts were not recognized as foreseeable, and because there were no prevailing standards for school safety by which schools could be held accountable. The new Virginia requirement for school safety audits makes liability an issue which cannot be overlooked. There are now standards and expectations which schools should strive to meet.

The new Standards of Accreditation include the establishment of a School Performance Report Card which will be disseminated to parents and the surrounding community, with data beginning in the 1997-98 school year. The Report Card features a Safety Index which includes:

- incidents of physical violence
- incidents of student firearm and/or weapon possession
- incidents of student possession of mind-altering drugs.

Violence prevention is a rapidly advancing field of study which encompasses the most effective and carefully studied approaches to school safety. More broadly, violence prevention also includes high risk behaviors such as substance abuse, weapon carrying, and gang involvement, as well as violent behavior. There is now a credible body of knowledge which educators can use for policy development, program selection, and decision-making in these areas. Educators no longer need to make policy decisions based on intuition, or to select violence prevention programs based solely on plausibility or convenience. Although the commercial education market presents schools with many appealing products --

ranging from curriculum packages to training workshops to alternative schools -- educators should insist on objective evidence of effectiveness as the fundamental selection criterion.

Increasingly, schools are held accountable for student achievement and are required to defend their curriculum and teaching methods. Similarly, schools should make sure their violence prevention initiatives are meaningful and effective. School safety audits represent an important opportunity for schools to evaluate their safety needs and take appropriate action.

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SAMPLE ITEMS FOR A SCHOOL SAFETY SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to determine student concerns about school safety. Your answers will be confidential and anonymous. No one will know how you answered. Please read each question carefully.

Age: ○ 11 ○ 12 ○ 13 ○ 14 ○ 15 ○ 16 ○ 17 ○ 18+

Grade: ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10 ○ 11 ○ 12

What is your racial/ethnic background?

- ○ Asian-American
- ○ Black, African-American
- ○ Hispanic, Mexican, Latino(a), Chicano(a)
- ○ Native American (American Indian)
- ○ White, European-American
- ○ Other

In general, what are your grades this year?

- ○ Mostly A's and B's
- ○ Mostly B's and C's
- ○ Mostly C's and D's
- ○ Mostly D's and below

Are you eligible for free/reduced school lunch?

○ Yes ○ No

Gender: ○ Male ○ Female

How many students at school do you consider to be really good friends?

○ none ○ one ○ two ○ three ○ more than three

How many adults at school could you talk to about a personal problem?

○ none ○ one ○ two ○ three ○ more than three

Is there any place where you do not feel safe at school?

○ No ○ Yes

If Yes, fill in all that apply)

- ○ bus stop
- ○ school bus
- ○ parking lot
- ○ restrooms
- ○ classrooms
- ○ gym
- ○ locker rooms
- ○ lunchroom
- ○ other
- ○ hallways
- ○ school grounds

Did any of these things happen *at school* in the past month (30 days)? *At school* means anywhere in school buildings, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school bus stop.

	True	False
There is someone at school who often bullies or picks on me.	○	○
I carried a knife for protection at school.	○	○
I carried a gun for protection at school.	○	○
I carried some other weapon (not a gun or knife) for protection at school.	○	○
I am reading this survey carefully.	○	○
I was in a physical fight with someone at school.	○	○
I used marijuana or other illegal drugs at school or on the way to school.	○	○
I drank beer, wine, or other alcohol at school or on the way to school.	○	○
I am telling the truth on this survey.	○	○

Did any of these things happen *outside school* in the past month (30 days)?

	True	False
There is someone outside school who often bullies or picks on me.	○	○
I carried a knife for protection outside school.	○	○
I carried a gun for protection outside school.	○	○
I carried some other weapon (not a gun or knife) for protection outside school.	○	○
I have been a member of a gang or similar group involved in violent or illegal activities.	○	○
I travelled to Antarctica.	○	○
I was in a physical fight with someone outside school.	○	○
I used marijuana or other illegal drugs outside school.	○	○
I drank beer, wine, or other alcohol outside school.	○	○

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